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EU Community Animal Health Policy (CAHP) Strategy 2007-2013

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Report Highlights:

The EU launched a new Community Animal Health Policy Strategy 2007-2013. This initiative results from the need for better collaboration and harmonization between member states in fighting animal disease outbreaks, as well as handling consumer scares emanating from food safety problems. Animal disease outbreaks and food scares in the past decade cost excessive amounts of money because of the ad hoc approach to remedy them and the fact that they all seemed to have occurred in only a few member states. This left the perception of decreased vigilance in these countries at the expense of all EU taxpayers' money. The EU also wants to step up multilateral collaboration in the OIE to ward off increased animal disease risks from increasing globalization of trade, as well as introducing new scientific tools, like new vaccines, in this fight.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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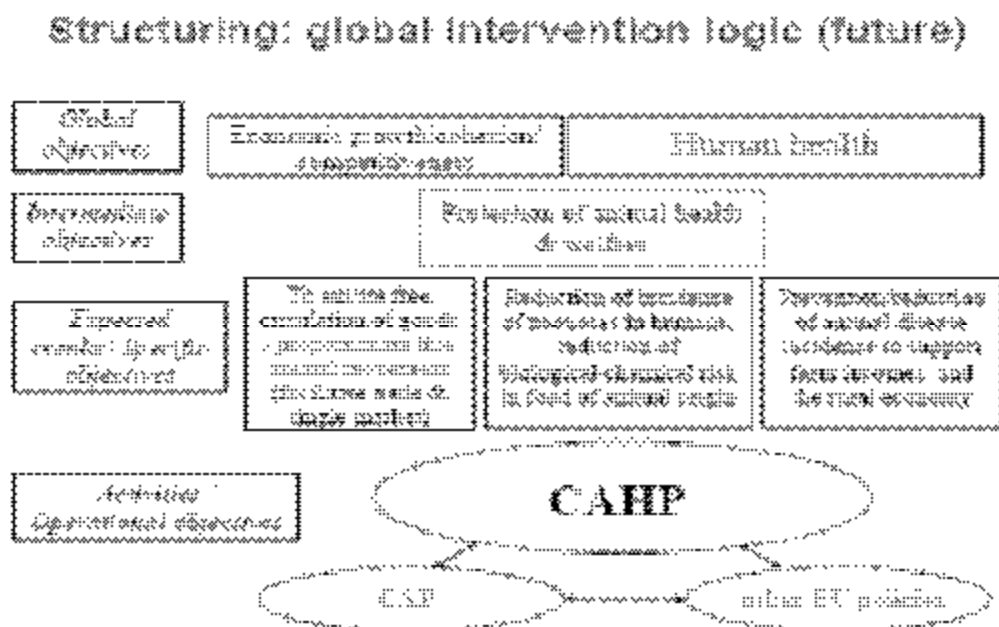
Community Animal Health Policy (CAHP) Evaluation 1995-2004 and suggestions for CAHP Strategy 2007-2013 presented at conference.

On November 7, 2006, the Finnish EU Presidency hosted a conference on the Community Animal Health Policy (CAHP) Strategy 2007-2013. The conference focused on an [evaluation report of the CAHP](#)¹ from 1995/2004. This evaluation was performed at the initiative of EC Commissioner Kyprianou, from Directorate General Health and Consumer Protection (DGSANCO), who announced a new EC Animal Health Strategy in 2004. The objective of this evaluation was to draw conclusions from the CAHP performance in the EU-15 during the past decade and to formulate initiatives for improvements for the coming years. These are clearly formulated in the [Key messages from the Evaluation](#)².

The main conclusions are:

- *The policy has consisted of a series of interrelated policy actions/actors operating under a large umbrella of legislation and formal/informal networks but without a strategy for the whole and limited assessment of the success of actions taken in terms of review and feedback on performance.*
- *Better consistency between actions to improve animal health and welfare in the EU and international competitiveness could be achieved by pursuing simplified rules, better regulation, and carrying out impact assessments before introducing new legislation.*
- *The need to move towards a policy which is more focused on effective risk management/disease prevention.*

An organigram depicts how the future CAHP should integrate with EU future policies³ (sections in red indicate new policy focuses).



¹ http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/strategy/main_report_part1_en.pdf

² http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/strategy/key_messages_en.pdf

³ http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/strategy/intervention_logic_en.pdf

Recommendations for the future are:

- *Further alignment of EU rules more closely with OIE guidelines and standards;*
- *A gradual move towards integrated electronic identification and certification procedures for intra-Community trade;*
- *The streamlining of texts going through the Standing Committee procedures;*
- *Providing specific support for bio-security measures at farm level via existing funds;*
- *Providing specific support to third countries to assist them in upgrading their animal health status to meet EU and international (OIE) requirements;*
- *Negotiating export conditions at Community level;*
- *Targeting illegal (commercial) imports/fraud.*

Practical implementation of these goals

The evaluation determined that the future CAHP should focus on an integrated risk management strategy with pro-active measures, particularly the prevention of diseases with high EU relevance. In the context of a future strategy, it would be important to clarify the following two issues:

- Who has the primary responsibility?
- What is the level of acceptable risk?

The CAHP evaluation suggested that cost-effectiveness analysis would be an essential pre-requisite to improving the prioritization of CAHP spending and in designing the right policy interventions and tools. More HACCP-type and science based risk assessment and risk management would be required to identify priorities for EU prevention and eradication programs and FVO inspections.

These options for the future were identified:

- A. Further alignment of EU legislation to OIE recommendations/standards and guidelines.
- B. Adopting integrated electronic systems for EU procedures applied in animal movement
 - B.1 Animal identification
 - B.2 Electronic certification (movement of live animals)
 - B.3 Data integration into a larger system linked to animal health status. This could be achieved through TRACES, the Community TRAdE Control and Expert System.
- C. Improving intra-Community trade in live animals: Electronic certification would provide potential gains in the effectiveness (reduction in illegal trade flows). This would require major technical progress in interoperability of national databases
- D. Rationalizing committee procedures: Currently all animal health proposals need to be agreed in the Standing Committee of the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCFAH). In a simplified procedure, the EC could decide alone and inform member states (MS) by written procedure in advance of the SCFAH. The decrease in transparency could be a source of conflict between MS and Commission.
- E. Targeting illegal imports/fraud: Increasing and reinforcing Border Inspection Posts (BIP) controls should better target illegal trade.
- F. Harmonizing EU export requirements
- G. Supporting on-farm bio-security measures
- H Reinforcing EU support to third countries to prevent the introduction of animal diseases from third countries to the EU.

The European Commission expects to present its action plan for the CAHP for 2007-2013 in a Commission Communication on the Community Animal Health Policy by mid 2007, specifying clear actions and target deadlines.

Conclusions, concerns and hopes for the future.

Past EU animal health policies too often responded to animal disease outbreaks and following consumer scares on an ad hoc basis. Suboptimal overall animal health strategies led to costly disease eradication and sub level funding of disease prevention. Consumer outcry about burning piles of animal carcasses during the 2002 FMD outbreak and high BSE monitoring bills have triggered the EC to review its animal health policies and better integrate and harmonize them with and between EU MS, including animal welfare policies, into a new action plan. The fact that animal disease outbreaks seemed to recurrently surface in the same few MS raised some doubts that these MS might have acted with less vigilance. At the same time, the other MS were left with the perception that these disease outbreaks used on their EU budget contributions in an unjustified way.

EU enlargements and the surge of new diseases, like AI H5N1 and Bluetongue, have increased the pressure for a new animal health approach. Increasing international transport, including increased imports of animal products, have increased the need for collaboration with third countries in the fight against animal diseases. Globalization is making the protection of European borders against animal diseases ever more difficult, as the increasing variety of goods and import origins is creating new threats.

Apart from internal harmonization and consolidation of animal health strategies through this new CAHP, the EC is committed to working with other countries on common animal and public health standards in the OIE. The EC is dedicated to include animal welfare standards into this multilateral forum. New scientific achievements, like monoclonal vaccines, also open new ways for controlling animal diseases and eradication without the stamping out of large numbers of animals. When properly regulated in OIE codes, these new paths should significantly decrease the cost of future animal disease outbreaks in the EU, as well as preventing massive consumer scares and outcry.

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